

From: Matt Bardeen
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 6:08am
Subject: Concerned Citizen

As a citizen of the United States of America, I'm concerned. As a computer user, I'm concerned. As a network administrator, I'm concerned.

First, a little background. I am in no means your average computer user. I started programming when I was 11 years old. That was 17 years ago. My first real computer came with a copy of Microsoft DOS (Disk operating system). I have been using Microsoft products in some form or another for all of the past 17 years. I have watched Microsoft grow from a small computer software manufacturer to one of the largest (and most profitable) in the world.

In that time I watched many competing products and companies, most of them truly innovative, fall before Microsoft's marketing and business strategies. There were products such as the GEM windowing desktop, Desqview DOS, and IBM OS/2, and companies such as Netware, Lotus, and Netscape.

I used Microsoft products and I didn't think anything of it. I put up with the instabilities, the fact that they only really worked well with other Microsoft products.

Then in 1995, I started working in a billion dollar company, supporting their worker's computer and administering part of their network. This company went from using a mixture of Microsoft and other products to using Microsoft products exclusively. During the 5 years I worked there, I saw Microsoft become more aggressive and more dangerous in the marketplace. I finally quit that company because I was fed up with telling the people I worked with "There's nothing I can do, it's a Microsoft problem."

The Internet is becoming increasingly Microsoft centric. There are sites that I used to use, but cannot anymore because they don't support my browser. Recently there has been a push by Microsoft to get record companies to use their Windows only media format for all new music releases. Microsoft's selling point on this is the inclusion of Windows Media Player in all the operating systems they sell. This is not beneficial to competition and will only serve to raise

the barrier to entry into the operating system market.

Recently, Microsoft has been pushing a system of software "rental", where you have to pay for your operating system every year, whether you require it or not. Given their monopoly power, they stand a good chance of implementing such a scheme. Once again, a Microsoft "innovation" that is of dubious gain to consumers.

The latest Microsoft marketing scheme is .NET and Passport, where they hope to implement (and corner) the market on micropayments on the net. Many analysts have pointed out that the key to .NET's success is the success of Microsoft's latest operating system, Windows XP, because it has the essential grounding for .NET built in to it.

All of these "innovations" are examples of Microsoft's current attempts to use their monopoly power to invade other markets. I feel that these attempts will be left untouched by the current remedies proposed by the Justice Department in the settlement of this case. This seems absurd to me because it is practices such as these that are specifically declared illegal under antitrust law, and indeed the same practices that the court has already found Microsoft guilty of using.

So, as a consumer, a network administrator, and a citizen, I can only demand that the settlement as proposed be scuttled and a more appropriate remedy be found which prevents Microsoft from further breaking the law.

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